

# The Computer Rag

## newsletter of the YOKOSUKA COMPUTER CLUB

DMS Box 187, FPO Seattle, WA 98765

News, Gossip and Innuendo

from the Western Pacific

Vol. 2 No. 6 July 1985

### Local Gossip

**July Meetings:** will be held on the 2nd Wed., Jul. 10, and the 3rd Tues., Jul. 16, both at 6 p.m. in OEC (top floor of Barracks C). No particular presentations are planned.

**Last Month:** Chris Demeyer demonstrated the Mockingboard on an Apple II. This clever gadget can produce stereo music, speech synthesis, and sound generation. Demeyer performed some text to speech conversions, blasted the audience with phasers and photon torpedoes, and treated everyone to "Mary Had A Little Lamb." The sound was excellent, but Chris did mention some frustration in talking to the board through CP/M. If anyone knows how to address the board through CP/M, instead of DOS 3.3, contact Demeyer at NCSJ Maint. Dept. Box 3, FPO 98762.

James Eno and Lawrence Charters demonstrated MacProject on the Macintosh. After the Mac performed its own, unassisted demonstration of how to prepare a wide variety of schedule, critical path, resource, timeline, and cost charts, Eno explained how he used the program to set up a "master" project showing all the hoops and hurdles in a typical Navy project. Charters pointed out that the NEX is selling MacProject for under \$100, and Apple is under pressure to up the price to \$250-500 so people will "take it seriously." Kurt Trichler noted some (less capable) programs for the IBM PC run anywhere from \$800 to \$6500. Several people wanted to know about the program's capacities: roughly 200 tasks per project on a 128K Mac, 2000 on a 512K Mac. Printed charts can measure from 10 by 8 inches to 94 by 48 inches.

The special meeting planned for June 25 was worthwhile, but not exactly as planned. DoDDS (DoD Schools) was going to send their area computer coordinator to explain what the schools were, or were not, offering in the way of computer education. A large number of teachers from the local school had asked for, and scheduled, a workshop with the coordinator, but some [very unkind word] idiot in Yokota decided the "teachers aren't serious" and cancelled everything -- without bothering to ask anyone local for their opinion. This is apparently the second or third time the

Japan DoDDS administrators have killed such training. Compared to a comprehensive plan drafted for all DoDDS schools worldwide in 1982, Japan schools are literally years behind where they should be in computer education -- and guess why.

In spite of these frustrations, Linda Blossom and Lawrence Charters discussed computer education for everyone from preschoolers to college students. Blossom showed how computers could be used to teach subjects other than computer programming, and discussed her use of Logo for art, deductive reasoning, and geometry, and explained the advantages and disadvantages of standard CAI (computer aided instruction) packages. She felt the biggest limitation in local schools was inadequate training of the staff, too few computers, and a certain "fuzziness" on the part of teachers and parents as to what they wanted students to learn. Charters, though teaching mostly at the college level, noted the same kinds of problems and limitations are present when teaching adults.

**Late??** You may have noticed the newsletter is late. Maybe we need a new newsletter editor! And President! And Vice President! And Treasurer! Yes, folks, its election time! All members are strongly encouraged to volunteer themselves or other members for office. So far, Robert McPherson has volunteered to act as club librarian, and Lawrence Charters is willing to continue as [tardy] newsletter editor. All positions, including these, are open for election. **Warning:** if there is the usual underwhelming interest in elections, the current officers may very well get together and use the club treasury to go on a buying binge of IBM PC and Apple Macintosh software. Since most of you have Apple IIs, you'll be sorry...

**A-33 has reduced** the price on a number of computer peripherals, and as of this writing was offering Epson FX-80 printers for \$399 and Comrex daisy wheels for \$319. They also just received an order for more Mac stuff, including the long-sought external disk drives and new versions of MacWrite, MacPaint, and the Mac operating system.

**Free News:** "qualified" individuals can get a free subscription to **Government Computer News** by writing to: Government Computer News, 1620 Elton Rd., Silver Springs, MD 20903.

### Non-Local Gossip

**Infomatics**, a computer consulting and design firm, is suing DOD over a TRIMIS (Tri Service Medical Information System) contract awarded to Electronic Data Systems. EDS is a supplier of medical software, and under the contract EDS is supposed to compare various hospital automation packages, including its own, for DOD use. Infomatics claims, under the circumstances, EDS can hardly do an objective job.



TRIMIS is also in hot water with Congress, which has spent tons of money on the program over the past decade but seen nothing come from it. Congress wants to know why TRIMIS has refused to look at the Veterans Administration computer system. VA is using small computers running public-domain [free] software written in MUMPS (some versions of which are also public-domain). If the VA system were adopted, critics charge, DOD could get a very low-cost system. Unfortunately, a MUMPS-based system would also put lots of high-priced DOD programmers, systems analysts, and MIS directors out of work, since MUMPS packages can be written by users with little or no help from professionals.

**Amiga**, Commodore's super graphics machine, is due for release in July, and Commodore is begging computer dealers (not mass marketers) to carry it. Dealers are resisting.

**IOmega** has done a booming business in Bernoulli boxes this year. The Bernoulli Box is essentially a floppy disk drive that doesn't flop -- the diskette is held in a rigid cartridge which allows it to store much more information (up to 20 Mbytes). Since the cartridges are removable, government agencies have been snapping them up for confidential work, as security regulations require the periodic removal and destruction of computer media. This is painful when you are using a \$2500 hard disk, but a Bernoulli cartridge holds just as much, is just as fast, and costs \$50-100 (though the drive costs \$1800-2200). IOmega just signed a big contract with Tandy for drives, and Macintosh versions have also been hot sellers.

**Personal Computer Support Group (PCSG)** is selling a battery operated 3.5" disk drive for the Radio Shack Model 100 and 200 for \$599. It holds 358K per diskette.

**Personal Integrated Computers** (yech, what a name) is selling PICDISC, a 3.5" disk system for the Model 100 which includes the CP/M operating system and an extra 32K of RAM to boost the system to 64K. PIC claims the system will run WordStar, but doesn't explain why you would want to. System price is \$599.

**Total U.S. IBM MIPS** (machine instructions per second): IBM 3030, 3080, 3090, 4300 series -- 50 (thousand); IBM PC's -- 550 (thousand).

**Super Duper Computer** -- Seymour Cray has released his latest, a machine offering a 4.1 nsec clock cycle, 256 million 64-bit words of main memory (2 gigabytes), one foreground and four background processors, and the UNIX operating system. It weighs 5,500 pounds, and is totally immersed in a fluorocarbon liquid for cooling. Easily the most powerful computer ever built, it probably will not be a big seller (at \$17.6 million) since it is not IBM PC compatible, and does not run Lotus 1-2-3 or Microsoft Flight Simulator.

**Apple Co-founder Steve Jobs** has been demoted at Apple, his day to day management powers stripped away in a board meeting late in May. John Sculley has taken over most management functions, and Apple II advocate Del Yocam is now in charge of worldwide operations. Just a few days later, Apple announced a huge layoff which, when combined with other layoffs this year, cuts the company payroll by over a third.

While newspapers played this up as a major disaster, dealers and users were delighted, and Apple's stock made a modest recovery. Apple has never been in any financial danger (the company still has millions of dollars sitting in banks), but a lack of growth and friction within the company have caused unease. Sculley, who invented the "Pepsi Generation" while at PepsiCo, is widely viewed as someone who can fix these problems.

**Merger and takeover rumors** have mentioned Apple and General Electric, Wang, ITT, AT&T, etc. One observer claimed, "Apple probably isn't going to marry anyone; it's against their corporate culture. Instead, they'll just live together."

**Dayna Communications**, much to everyone's surprise, has started shipping MacCharlie, a \$1195 kit that allows a Macintosh to run IBM PC software. Consisting of 256K of RAM, a 5.25" disk drive, and a keyboard extension, MacCharlie attaches to the Mac without any modifications to the Mac. When not being used as an IBM PC, the MacCharlie extension can be used as a RAM disk, and the Mac also has free use of the MacCharlie parallel port.

**General Motors** is purchasing 8,000 Macs (to go along with the 2,000 it already has) and 10,000 MacCharlies. Dayna Communications is in shock; they had expected to sell only 10,000 MacCharlies all year.

**Microsoft** has released Microsoft Logo for the Mac at \$124.95. It will be competing against ExperLogo, which is more expensive but which offers 3-D graphics.

**Borland Intl.** will be releasing Modula-2, C, and BASIC compilers, in that order, all for under \$100. Eventually, they will also release an Ada subset, LISP, Prolog, and possibly SmallTalk packages. The Modula-2 and C packages will be "optimizing" compilers, running two to four times faster than Turbo Pascal.

**Epson's new HS-80** Letterjet inkjet printer weighs four pounds, making it very portable, and sells for \$449. A heavier version, weighing six pounds and called the HS-80T, costs \$1,700 -- but is Tempest certified.

**Atari** will ship its 520ST computer to users groups, not retailers. The operating system, TOS (Tramiel Operating System), is full of bugs, so has not been burned into ROM. Users will undoubtedly patch it to work, doing Atari's work for them. As shipped, the \$800 machine will have 512K RAM,



one built-in 3.5" disk drive, a keyboard, and a 12" b&w monitor, all made in Taiwan. Also included will be either BASIC or Logo. Atari claims the 520ST will be in computer showrooms sometime in July.

**Atari also claims** it will offer a 500 megabyte compact laser disk drive sometime this summer, priced at less than \$500.

**Twin**, a Lotus 1-2-3 clone, is rumored to be one item Atari is thinking of including in its 520ST package.

**Datran**, a brand-new company, has produced Modem Accelerator, an IBM PC board with a 32,000 word dictionary stored in ROM and custom tokenizing and compression chips. Included with the \$795 price is a spelling checker package that checks 500 words per second. Through tokenizing, a 1200 baud modem can transmit data at a 3600 baud rate.

**Valdocs 2.0** is available for the Epson QX-10 and -16. Many users are greatly pleased with the software, but at least one Yokosuka resident complains about the size of the package (it requires both disk drives, and leaves almost no room for user files), and thinks Epson and Rising Star, the package creator, oversold the product.

**Rising Star** has severed its exclusive agreement with Epson, and will release a version of Valdocs for the Atari 520ST. Valdraw will be available in July, with the communications modules, spreadsheet, and business graphics coming out a month later. By 1986 the disk management, word processor, data base, font design, address book, scheduler, and setup modules should be released.

**Microsoft** has announced MSX-2, an expanded version of its low-cost operating system, very popular in both Japan and Europe. MSX-2 permits use of a wider variety of disk drives and other storage devices, has built-in telecommunications features, offers 512X212 resolution in up to 256 colors, and uses dedicated chips for faster screen displays.

**Why you can't expect** a spectacular, well planned, innovative computer from AT&T: "Bell Labs is 9,000 PhD's connected by a parking lot."

**On May 16**, Lotus changed its mind and decided it wouldn't be such a bad idea to sell 1-2-3 to the Air Force and Navy. Under the Tempest microcomputer contract, the two services wanted to purchase over 8,000 copies of 1-2-3, but insisted the copy protection be removed. Lotus refused, but has since decided it could force itself to produce a special "Armed Forces" version which could be installed on a hard disk and which would allow up to five backups. The military is considering the offer.

**Tandy's Model 1000**, a popular IBM PC clone with lots of extras, is now selling for \$999, and the 1200HD, which includes a hard disk, for \$1999. Tandy is dropping the Model 4P, generally

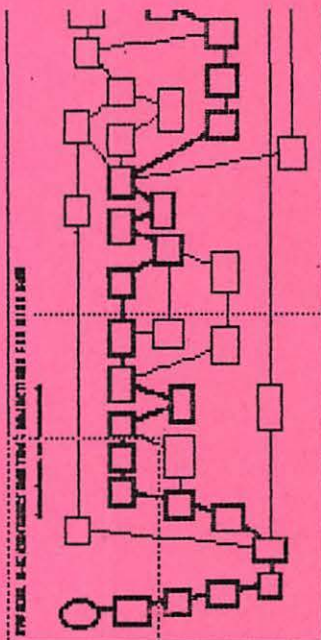
considered the best made of all the 8-bit portables, because of poor sales, but keeping the desktop Model 4.

**Columbia Data Systems**, which recently filed for Chap. 11, has been ordered to liquidate.

### Macintosh Software

**Seven disks** of Macintosh software have been donated to the club. **YCC#1** contains various desk accessories (in particular, Ap12c, MockWrite, MockPrint, MockTerm, DiskInfo, and Extras) plus Desk Accessory Mover 1.4. **YCC#2** contains a complete collection of standard fonts, plus Cairo-12 & 36, Chicago 9 & 24, London 12 & 36, Monaco 10 & 20, Seattle 10 & 20, and Venice 24 & 28. **YCC#3** has several games, including Life, Missile Command, Daleks, Iago, and Reversi. **YCC#4** has several utility programs, including many which require Microsoft BASIC (version 1 or 2), among which is a nice disk cataloging package. **YCC#5** has a new version of the Mac operating system (4.1), several MBASIC programs, and general trivia. **YCC#6** contains lots of MacPaint pictures and a couple utilities for manipulating pictures. **YCC#7** has a strange operating system and an early version of Switcher, a multi-program utility for 512K Macs.

All disks include an operating system, and feature a surprise when you "boot" the disks with the reset button. These disks are **not** in the regular club library, but are available by contacting the Newsletter Editor at 234-4326 or USNH Box 65-1561, FPO 98765.



Greatly reduced view of part of Eno's master project chart for Navy projects, as shown on MacProject.